

HONORING SELECT MEMBERS OF
THE WILCOX COUNTY COMMISSION**HON. EARL F. HILLIARD**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 5, 1997

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, I come before you today to honor some select members of the Wilcox County Commission for their support of the historic Gee's-Bend Ferry project in Wilcox County, Alabama.

Commission Chairman Darryl Perryman, Vice-Chairman John Clyde Riggs, and County Commissioners David Wright, and Lena Powell have shown an extraordinary amount of foresight, sound judgment, and compassion in fully supporting the plight of the residents of Gee's-Bend Alabama by re-establishing the ferry boat service which has unfairly divided their community since the days of segregation and Jim Crow rule. These public servants understood that you can not explain-away why the citizens of Gee's-Bend must wait up to 2 hours for an ambulance to take them to the hospital, or for their children to ride to-and-from school, or just to go to the grocery store or the bank.

Mr. Speaker, I feel this Congress owes these aforementioned County Commission Members a hearty "thank you" and a resounding "job well done." I myself, am gratified by their unselfish service.

HONORING TRESSLER ADOPTION
SERVICES**HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 5, 1997

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tressler Adoption Services of York, PA, which celebrates 25 years of doing the most rewarding work—creating families. I cannot say enough about the people who open their homes and hearts to those children who are given up for adoption, and I have the utmost respect for those professionals who spend their time and energy finding the right match for both parents and children.

The good people at Tressler have been placing children with loving families in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware for the last quarter of a century, believing that every child deserves a caring, stable environment in which to grow and develop as a human being. It is this belief that has made Tressler somewhat unique in the field of adoption services, focusing on placing older children and children with special needs, rather than the much sought after newborn adoptees.

Tressler's success has been nothing short of magnificent. In their 25 years of service, Tressler has placed nearly 2,500 children of American descent, giving them what you and I take for granted—a home with parents, who couldn't love them any more than if they were their natural parents.

Their mission—to help create a stable, caring environment by providing the adoption services that place children in loving homes, preparing families for the adoption experience, and offering ongoing support for all families involved in their program—deserves both our recognition and respect.

I also want to specifically thank Mrs. Barbara Holtan, director of adoption services, and her staff at Tressler for their compassion and dedication.

Mr. Speaker, in honor of all of the years of Tressler's service to the families and adopted children of central Pennsylvania, I want to reaffirm our commitment as a nation that we will do all that we can to provide children with a loving, stable, and emotionally secure family life. Tressler has set a high standard to meet during their next quarter century, and I am confident that they will continue to push their benchmark ever higher.

DR. JAMES H. BILLINGTON'S COM-
MENTS ON THE 100TH ANNIVER-
SARY OF THE OPENING OF THE
THOMAS JEFFERSON BUILDING
OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**HON. TOM LANTOS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 5, 1997

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the centenary of the opening of the Thomas Jefferson building of the Library of Congress. This magnificent edifice has now served the American people and the U.S. Congress for 100 years.

This is an anniversary that should be noted, remembered, and appreciated by all of us here in the Congress, who benefit from the excellent facilities and the outstanding staff of the Library, and it is an anniversary that all Americans should join with us in celebrating. All Americans are blessed with the outstanding collection of materials housed in the Library, but we are also fortunate to be able to enjoy the beauty of the Thomas Jefferson building, which is one of the finest public buildings in our Nation. This building reflects the best of American architecture, art, engineering, and construction.

Mr. Speaker, on this important anniversary of the opening of the Thomas Jefferson building, I ask that a short article of Dr. James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress, be placed in the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to read it. The article by Dr. Billington appeared in the October/November issue of *Civilization*, a magazine published by the Library of Congress which provides information and background about the incredible resources our national library possesses. Mr. Speaker, *Civilization* is only one of the many creative innovations that Dr. Billington has contributed since he became Librarian of Congress 10 years ago this September.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in celebrating a century of service to the American people of the Thomas Jefferson building and to join me in commending Dr. Billington on his decade of outstanding service to our Nation as Librarian of Congress.

A GLORIOUS MOMENT FOR MR. MAX WEST

(By Dr. James H. Billington)

On a rainy Monday, November 1, 1897, the "largest, costliest, and safest" library building in the world opened its doors to the public without ceremony. In a front-page story that day, the Washington Evening Star noted that "the rain did not come amiss to the bookworms" who rushed to the Library's new building but "rather served to heighten

their enjoyment [of] the literary feast provided for them."

The first volume requested after the doors were opened, reported the Star, was "'Roger Williams' Year Book' of so recent a date that it had not been received. . . . The first book applied for and given out was 'Martha Lamb's History of New York City' and the gentleman [reader] . . . bore the name of Max West."

The new Italian Renaissance building housed 1 million books, 55,000 maps and other items that had been carted across the street from the Capitol, which had been the Library's overcrowded home for 97 years. The new structure was not only the most modern library building in existence, it was also a unique architectural feat. The Library's glittering dome, plated with 23-carat gold leaf, capped an elaborately decorated facade and a spectacular marble interior adorned by murals, frescoes and statuary created by more than 40 leading American artists.

For months prior to the official opening, newspapers and popular magazines carried effusive articles about the new Library. Few visitors were disappointed. Senator Justin Morrill of Vermont, one of the Library's chief supporters in Congress, felt that its "grandeur and felicitous finish" would be likely to remain long unrivaled "in this or any other country." Speaker of the House Joseph G. Cannon called it the best public building in Washington. Architecture critic Montgomery Schuyler praised the structure as a "national possession, an example of a great public building monumentally conceived, faithfully built, and worthily adorned." On November 25, 1897, more than 4,700 people visited the Library during special Thanksgiving Day tours.

The new building—today one of the Library's three major buildings on Capitol Hill and named the Thomas Jefferson Building after the Library's chief founder—was completed at a time of considerable optimism and national pride. The election of William McKinley in 1896 had seemed to inaugurate a period of domestic tranquility. Prosperity was returning after the great Wall Street panic of 1893. There was unfinished business: The Civil War and Reconstruction had brought black Americans emancipation but nothing close to equality, and reformers decried child labor, slums and extremes of wealth and poverty. Nevertheless, all 45 states (Oklahoma, Arizona and New Mexico were still territories) were now linked by telegraph and transcontinental railroads; the population, swollen by European immigration, had reached 76 million; the country boasted steel mills and farms second to none; the telephone was beginning to take hold in the cities; the first automobiles had appeared. New land-grant colleges, notably in the Midwest, were producing future managers, engineers and teachers, and Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy had begun to build hundreds of local public libraries. Progress was in the air.

This November, we plan to mark the 100th birthday of this glorious building without great fanfare but with deep gratitude to our forebears. There will be a gathering of members of Congress and other friends and benefactors of the Library, and a new brass plaque honoring Senator Morrill will be unveiled. Curators will make fresh additions to "American Treasures," our permanent rotating exhibition of great artifacts and published works from the Library's collections.

And, as we look back to the 1890s, we also will note certain differences in the 1990s. Visitors to the exhibition halls have to come and go through security gates—a necessity, sadly, on Capitol Hill these days. On the bright side, more than 60 images of the